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THE STROLLIAD:

AN HUDIBRASTIC MIRROR.

" When Caps into the Air are thrown,
" What fits each Man may make his own."

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

STROLLIAD.

THE Pen of Satire was deſign'd
To laſh the Follies of Mankind;
To point out Vice, tho' dignify'd
With all the Pomp of titled Pride,
To ſhew where Seeds of Faction lurk,
Where Prieſts perform the Devil's Work,
As ſome have done——and to correct
Abuſes that Diſgrace reflect.

My Muſe ſhall at a Diſtance wait,
Nor meddle with Affairs of State.
In Verſe no Party will I ſlaughter,
I hate to fiſh in troubled Water;
Embers of Diſcord than be fanning,
I'd rather ſing of Betty Canning;
Indiff'rent whether F—x or P—t
Upon the Treas'ry-Bench doth ſit;
Their aim alike---the Loaves and Fiſhes
Afford the Summit of their Wiſhes;
And Whig or Tory, 'tis the ſame,
Plutus points out the Road to Fame.
I ſhall not ſtrive Applauſe to gain
By fulſome Panegyric Strain;
Leave that to Birth-Day Laureats, who
E'er did, and will that Track purſue;
While I, remote from Courts and Kings,
Chooſe humbler Theme, and meaner Things.

In fam'd UTOPIA, Iſle well known,
Where Fable, on preceptive Throne,
Relates known Facts in dark Diſguiſe,
Yet viſible to piercing Eyes;
UTOPIA, often ſung in Fiction,
When Star-Chambers would prove a Diction;
Had Meanings beſt their Purpoſe ſuiting
To nip poor Freedom's Bud firſt ſhooting;
When Miniſters were known Defaulters,
And ſacrific'd on PLUTO's Altars
All noble Feelings---for whoſe Mammon
Young Imps were ſporting at Back-Gammon;
When Diſſipation rul'd the Court,
And Decency was Public Sport;
When STUART---(be the Name forgot!)
By turns the Libertine and Sot,
The Sceptre held, and low Buffoons
In Concert rul'd with Scottiſh Loons;

At ſuch a Time, when Satire's Pen,
By Reaſon guided, laſh'd great Men,
Who, being in the Seat of Pow'r,
Like Locuſts would the Land devour;
Make the rich Soil a barren Waſte,
To ſuit Depravity of Taſte:
Then hath the Muſe in Allegory
Convey'd the explicable Story;
For, ſtrange to tell!---the Time hath been
When ſpeaking Truth was deem'd a Sin;
And Lawyers would contend the Bible
'Gainſt Government contain'd a Libel;
That Words, if quoted, were ſeditious,
And Inuendos prov'd malicious.
But in our Days of Liberty,
When Judges, Juries, all are free,
Who e'er perverts the Courſe of Juſtice?
(A Stab to Freedom which the worſt is)

A Verdict would attempt to biaſs,
The deareſt Privilege deny us,
We hold from glorious Magna Charta?
A Treaſure we for Gold won't barter!
In fam'd UTOPIA, in a Town
By Commerce rais'd to great Renown,
At whoſe fair Port are ſeen unfurl'd
Sails from all Quarters of the World;
A City which recorded ſtands,
Like London, for its BRAVE TRAIN'D BANDS,
HEROES WHO FAINT AT SMELL OF POWDER,
And to diſcharge a Muſquet ſhudder.
'Twas on a Day, ordain'd by ROME
For Pray'r at Church, and Faſt at Home,
To ſhew their Rev'rence to Decorum,
Were met, (Defiance to the Quorum),
A ſtrolling Crew, a mumming Band,
Whom Penal Laws as Vagrants brand,

Collected from each Barn and Stable,
Where THESPIAN Wights amuſe the Rabble;
Where Muſes, forc'd to Proſtitution,
(Sore Rape upon their Conſtitution!)
By WOULD-BE Actors, void of Merit,
As tender Feelings, Senſe, or Spirit;
Yet, ſpite of Reaſon, Nature, Wit,
To ſuch Embrace they muſt ſubmit.

" In ROME, where ROSCIUS gain'd his Fame,
" Upon an Aſs each Actor came;"
But now---UTOPIA Witneſs bears---
Some Aſſes are transform'd to Play'rs;
To fill the Perſonæ Dramatis,
Centaurs come in; while ſome, like Thetis,
Can various Shapes aſſume at Will---
Proteus had not a greater Skill.

Who could the motley Group eſpy,
And not think 't a Menagerie?

Where

Where Animals of diff'rent Species
Howl, yelp, and bray, whoſe Din ne'er ceaſes:
The Wolf---reſum'd Lycaon's Shape---
Tho' humaniz'd, ſtill grins the Ape;
Tho' each of Man th' Exterior bears,
His Mind its priſtine Nature wears.

Divines may laugh at Tranſmigration,
As I at Tranſubſtantiation;
But till the ſtupid Bookworms ſhew
A Reaſon why 't may not be ſo,
I have Opinion of my own,
And will maintain it 'gainſt the Gown.

Who ever did the C*******r hear
(Chancellor)
But form'd th' Idea of a Bear?
Or Bully B*******t, fac'd with Braſs,
(earcroft)
But ſoon perceiv'd a learned Aſs?
Heard croaking B***l*y on the Stage,
(ubley)
In an Exceſs of Grief or Rage,

But

But had the Raven ſtrong impreſs'd
(Ill-omen'd Bird!) within his Breaſt?
When FARRENELLI bridles on,
Can we forget the ſtately Swan?
If BRIDGET's Eyes laſcivious move,
Who but perceives the am'rous Dove?
The dulcet Note when MARTYR ſings,
The ſprightly Lark our Fancy brings,
Who, ſoaring tow'rds the God of Day,
Drives Melancholy far away:
While BANNISTER, in plaintive Tale,
Conveys the tuneful Nightingale.
Sure KENNEDY's melodious Pipe
O' th' whiſtling Blackbird is a Type.
DIGNUM's FALSETTA, clear and ſtrong,
Appears the Bullfinch's wild Song.
When ſtupid B**re**tt attempts a Quaver,
The Screechowl haunts my Fancy ever.

If

If W*illiame********s ſings I ever laugh,
He bellows ſo much like a Calf;
And S*mit****h's Monotony is full
Of Muſic, as a Parſon's Bull.
Runs E*dwi****n his Farrago over,
But we the chatt'ring Pye diſcover?
As incoherent and as ſenſeleſs,
Jargon on Reaſon's Scale defenceleſs.
When B*oot****h comes on, half-choak'd with Fat,
Doth he not flutter like a Bat?
The ſnarling Cur in B*ad elle***d***y
Strikes our Ideas forcibly.
When St*aunto******n ſtands forth as a Singer,
Thoſe Days I think of, when the Bringer
Of a Wolf's Head a Price receiv'd,
And Men were from its Howl reliev'd.
For Inſtances were I to ſearch
The Bar, the Theatre, and Church,

They would appear AD INFINITUM,
Nay, faſter riſe than I could write 'em:
So great Affinity thro' all
The Species, brute and rational,
That Nature ſeems but to revolve,
And varied Shapes the Problem ſolve.
Th' Aſſembly met for high Debate
On Bus'neſs of their mighty State,
A State firſt founded in a Cart,
Where THESPIS gain'd the happy Art
To mimick Grief or Mirth at Will,
And with hard Coin his Pockets fill;
Yet, ere the weighty Matter's known,
On which fine Rhetoric was ſhewn,
Such flow'ry Tropes and Metaphors
As flow from ſtrolling Orators,
Who with a Drum each Town parade,
To tell what will at Night be play'd:

Each

Each Member's Merit I ſhall ſing,
To Light their loſt Perfections bring;
Suppoſe them human, and awhile
Their Nature in their Shapes beguile.
A Son of Criſpin firſt appears,
The Craft employ'd his earlier Years;
But, with Ambition fir'd, he rather
Would cut up Characters than Leather:
Nature can never be eras'd——
A Clown looks clowniſh, tho' belac'd;
Dreſs'd as a King, the dark Diſguiſe
Can't hide the Cobler from our Eyes.
A Churl---whom Parents, in Deſpite
Of Reaſon, forc'd to read and write,
Then, to purſue the adverſe Plan,
Dull Rolls of Parchment bound to ſcan
For tedious Years---came next in View,
The Bully of th' itin'rant Crew;

His Genius, tho' awhile conceal'd,
The Slaughter-Houſe at length reveal'd;
There he exchang'd vile Ink for Blood,
Unrivall'd as a Butcher ſtood;
And now, where Merit is rewarded,
The ſlighteſt Gleam not diſregarded,
Greatly he acts---and, lac'd all o'er,
Can ſay "The Coach is at the Door!"
Another, of Coloſſian Stride,
With Front would Modeſty deride,
Nature's chaſte Bounds to overleap,
Diſtanc'd poor Merit the firſt Step.
Muſic his Aim---prov'd not his Forte---
He to THALIA would make Court,
Try'd Shakeſpear's Page---his vague Pretence
Stript Oſtrick of all Conſequence.
A Failure won't the Bold ſubdue,
He next MELPOMENE did woo;

Daggers

Daggers and Bowls then caught his Eye,
Reſolv'd their wond'rous Pow'r to try;
Now in Blank Verſe his Fury vents,
And murders all he repreſents.

A Proverb has been Ages extant,
" The nearer Church from God more diſtant;"
But here we'll prove its Fallacy,
And to Opinion give the Lie.

The next, tho' bred in chaunting Choir,
His Virtue ever kept entire:
What various Graces in him meet!
An utter Stranger to Conceit;
With Voice that raviſhes each Senſe;
Deportment void of all Offence;
A Shape from which an Artiſt might
Copy APOLLO with Delight,
And, having finiſhed the Piece,
Challenge the Works of ancient GREECE.

Fir'd with a Thirſt of Liberty,
As ROME for Ages did enjoy;
Anxious to give the Commonweal
Due Dignity——with Patriot Zeal,
(When for a Senatorial Seat
Contending Candidates did meet)
To ſhew his Country lay at Heart,
In the hard Conteſt he took Part;
For CATALINE then gave his Voice,
(Who ſits return'd the People's Choice.)
But ſee the Stroke of adverſe Fate!
The diſappointed Candidate
Demurr'd at Votes---not being legal---
The COALITION ſworn to plague all,
And 'fore a Court of Scrutiny
Reſolv'd each wily Art to try---
Our Hero---ſore Mortification!---
His Vote having ſtood Inveſtigation,

There heard the puny Judge decree,
It only lack'd---VALIDITY.
The Merit lies in the Attempt;
From Failure no one is exempt:
With others tho' Contempt he ſhares,
" He greatly does who greatly dares."
The next a compound Character,
By Turns a Painter and an Actor:
An At-all never reach'd Perfection;
In ſome Attempts he'll meet Detection;
If on the Canvas he can ſhew
A Picture where rich Colours glow,
From Royal Students bear the Prize,
Where partial Judgment Merit tries,
The Summit ſtill is hard to climb,
And a laborious Work of Time.
When Genius is ſubdivided,
By different Purſuits miſguided,

The Painter damps the Player's Fire;
The Sparks depreſs'd will ſoon expire,
Or glow with Languor---If the Muſe
The Hero ardently purſues,
The Picture will unfiniſh'd ſtand,
And ſhew it wants a MASTER's Hand.
A Vot'ry at Apollo's Shrine
In the mock Cavalcade did join;
So dull his Senſes appear'd all
Practiſing the Dead March in SAUL,
He---bound in leaden Morpheus' Chain---
Took Snuff, and fell aſleep again.
One came whoſe Melody hath Charms
Where gen'rous Wine the Boſom warms;
Loſt on the Stage for Want of Pow'r,
His Day was finiſh'd in an Hour.
To ſtrive againſt the Tide is vain:
Let him the Compting-Houſe again

With Speed explore---there make FRESH ENTREE;
He'll gain no Credit here---PER CONTRA.
Then SNIP came in---a harmleſs Soul
As e'er was made a Prompter's Tool;
Aſſents to all the Reſt propoſe,
Nor takes the Pains himſelf to chooſe
'Twixt Right and Wrong---his mind e'er ſhrinking
From the laborious Taſk of Thinking:
He acted too---but found that Speech hard
O' th' ſecond Murderer in RICHARD.
No more he riſques the Muſe's Jeers,
But minds the Wardrobe and his Sheers.
Who's that muſt next my Verſe employ,
" As hot as JOHNSON's angry Boy?"
The PROMPTER, by his vacant Face,
In which Expreſſion claims no Place;
A docile Tool by all allow'd,
Can laugh or cry, as ſuits the Crowd;

If the GREAT ACTRESS mimics Grief,
He'll blubber in his Handkerchief;
A Story if the MAN'GER tells,
His burſting Cheek with Laughter ſwells;
But in no Caſe the purblind Elf
Has Judgment to direct himſelf.
A Son of Humour next came in,
A nimble-footed HARLEQUIN:
In Pantomime juſt Praiſe he meets
Who well performs his antic Feats;
But when he rants forth Tragedy,
The Audience laugh where they ſhould cry.
If Plays were written in Bombaſt,
His Acting could not be ſurpaſs'd.
A MAJOR STURGEON in the Rear
Would ARISTOPHANES appear;
Attempts broad Humour---not his own---
Where the Original was known.

'Tis

'Tis a hard Task for Men of Merit
To give a Copy with true Spirit;
But for Pretenders, who could e'er
Such Arrogance with Patience bear?
It juſt as well with Reaſon ſuits
To ſee a Woman in JACK-BOOTS.
In Order rang'd---(firſt lock'd the Doors)---
Like OTWAY's dark Conſpirators,
On precious Miſchief to conſult,
In fancy'd Triumphs to exult,
The Chairman firſt, 'yclep'd Sir John,
A long elab'rate Speech begun;
E'en K*****e for Prolixity
Was never more renown'd than he;
K*****e, the Hero of Old Drury,
Whoſe dull Preciſion how endure ye?
But the SIDDONIAN Furor rages,
Engroſs'd by Relatives the Stage is:

MELPOMENE

MELPOMENE has forc'd upon her
One who deſpoil'd a MAID OF HONOUR;
And Siſters two intrude in Parts,
But never can affect our Hearts,
Which others would who're laid aſide,
A Sacrifice to Fam'ly Pride.

Silence knock'd down, th' exalted Wight
Harrangu'd the Troop with wond'rous Might——
Sir HUDIBRAS, array'd and mounted,
With leſs ECLAT his Feats recounted.

Words muſt acquire a pond'rous Strength
Extended to a triple Length;
Carry Conviction thrice as ſtrong
As thoſe ſent tripping from the Tongue:
No Wonder then they ſtood amaz'd,
And at their wooden Idol gaz'd,
Whoſe Reaſoning was ſo profound,
That Approbation echo'd round.

So

So have I, in a public Hall,
A COMMON-COUNCILMAN heard bawl,
" You ſee" e'er grating on the Ear,
" He ſaid, ſays he," cloſe on its Rear,
" I acks," and Phraſes as correct,
His vaſt Abilities reflect:
When, having clos'd, Applauſe aloud
Was utter'd by th' illit'rate Crowd.

The PROMPTER roſe with " I beg Pardon,
" But this Affair I muſt be heard on:
" Shall we our Secrets have betray'd?
" Ourſelves a Laughing-Stock be made?
" I'd rather forfeit Half my Salary
" Than be the Butt of ſo much Raillery:
" I move——That any Member who
" From this Society ſhall go,
" Without aſſigning a juſt Cauſe,
" Or ſhall divulge our Strolling Laws,

" May never more a Truncheon handle,
" Or ſhare another Inch of Candle."
Much more he ſaid, but ſuch Tautology,
If quoted, muſt require Apology;
'Twould tire the mildeſt Reader's Patience,
If it deſtroy'd not his Complacence.
Another and another got up,
As, when the Deluge ceas'd, Men ſhot up
From Stones DEUCALION threw to Earth,
Which ſtrait produc'd a wond'rous Birth;
With Diff'rence---thoſe were to remain,
Theſe roſe, and then ſunk down again.
The Simile will better hold
With what of CADMUS we are told,
Whoſe Dragons' Teeth, to Men erected,
Their own Deſtruction ſoon effected;
For preſently, with Noiſe and Pother,
The Set confounded one another;

Confuſion

Confuſion reign'd---the CHAIRMAN's Hammer,
Unable to ſuppreſs the Clamour,
Was broke in Pieces---As a Wand,
Deſtroy'd in a Magician's Hand,
Reſtricts his Pow'r---loſt his Authority,
The mock DEMOSTHENES Superiority
No longer claim'd---but left the Chair,
And in the Diſcord took a Share---
All Anarchy---the Tow'r of BABEL
To vie with it was barely able:
Alluſion Nothing bears ſo well
As the wild INDIANS' horrid Yell---
Their diſmal Warwhoop---where, in Fight,
HELL ſeems to ſcream with all its Might.
Enrag'd, each ſtrove, by Strength of Lungs,
To drown the Din of other Tongues;
Which---as the Empiric's gilt Pill,
For one it cures, will twenty kill---

Did

Did but encreaſe the rude Commotion,
As boiſt'rous Winds the raging Ocean:
So have I, in the Summer, ſeen
(The Atmoſphere before ſerene,)
With ſudden Clouds the Sky o'erſpread,
And Storms come burſting o'er my Head.
Splenetic grown, and Half-exhauſted,
In Terms opprobrious they accoſted,
'Till, choak'd with Gall, each in Diſmay,
SANS CEREMONIE---walk'd away.

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